

## **JUDICIAL BRANCH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Type:** Standing Committee  
**Established:** August 7, 2012  
**Revised:** October 15, 2015  
**Chair:** Taylor Kilgore, Esq., Judicial Branch Communication Access Specialist  
**Report Date:** Annually (on September 1st)  
**Reports to:** Chiefs & Supreme Judicial Court

### **Background**

Maine has become increasingly diverse, and the Maine court system continues to respond to the needs of a more diverse community. In addition, the court system continues to respond to the needs of Maine's deaf and hard-of-hearing community. Assuring language and hearing access to justice requires planning and a consistent commitment to quality services in court proceedings.

Supported and encouraged by the work of the Justice Action Group, a Task Force was created by the Supreme Judicial Court in June 2005 to develop a Limited English Proficiency Program Plan that addressed a number of issues involving court practices for obtaining and using interpreter services, training of interpreters, court staff, and attorneys, and translation of key court documents.

The Task Force completed its work with the adoption of Judicial Branch policies and Administrative Orders related to language and hearing access, and the individual members of the Task Force continued to work on various LEP projects including the on-going recruitment and training of interpreters, and the training of court staff and personnel on issues of cultural competency.

Since that time, the Judicial Branch has improved its capacity to address LEP and cultural competency issues in a more direct and structured way. The creation of this Standing Advisory Committee is intended to assist the Administrative Office of the Court, judicial leadership, the trial judges, and the rest of the Judicial Branch personnel with all of the issues associated with access to the court system by LEP individuals.

### **I. Purpose:**

The purpose of the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Advisory Committee is to advise the Communication Access Specialist and Judicial Branch leadership

in developing and maintaining a comprehensive system for providing and improving access to Maine courts for individuals with limited English proficiency or hearing loss.

## **II. Authority:**

The Advisory Committee may seek input, suggestions, and recommendations from individuals and groups within and outside of the Judicial Branch. The Advisory Committee is authorized to study procedures considered by or in effect in other court systems and any other model procedures. It is authorized to consult with any person or organization as necessary.

Clerical assistance, as necessary, will be arranged through the Communication Access Specialist.

The Advisory Committee will:

- A. Review the current state of LEP and interpretation services in the Judicial Branch;
- B. Assist in the prioritization of needed improvements;
- C. Make recommendations regarding use of LEP policies and resources;
- D. Draft policies, administrative orders, or proposed statutes to support recommendations;
- E. Provide strategic support for requests that require legislative approval; and
- F. Make recommendations to the State Court Administrator, the Trial Court Chiefs, and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court.

## **III. Membership:**

The membership on the Committee shall include the following, and may be augmented or modified from time to time at the request of the Chair with the approval of the Supreme Judicial Court. Members are appointed for three-year terms by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court, and may be reappointed for up to three additional terms by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court.

Judicial Branch Communication Access Specialist, Chair, *ex officio*  
Clerk, District Court  
Clerk, Superior Court  
State Judicial Marshal Representative  
Justice, Maine Superior Court  
Judge, Maine District Court

Staff Attorney, Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project

Three members of the public engaged in LEP issues preferably with connections to foreign language or disability communities and a member of a college foreign language faculty

Justice, Maine Supreme Judicial Court, Liaison

**IV. Meetings:**

The LEP Advisory Committee will meet on a schedule established by the Chair, but no less often than four times a year. The Chair may also establish subgroups to study designated issues and report recommendations for consideration by the Committee as a whole. Those subgroups will meet on a schedule established by the Chair. The Committee may use video conferencing to assist with meeting capacity.

**V. Reporting:**

The LEP Advisory Committee will submit a written report of its progress to the Supreme Judicial Court annually on September 1st or as otherwise requested.

**VI. Committee Duration:**

The LEP Advisory Committee will be a Standing Committee of the Judicial Branch.

Dated: October 15, 2015

Approved by:

/s/

Chief Justice Leigh I. Saufley  
Maine Supreme Judicial Court